# New Construction

## *Residential Design Guidelines*

*NC1* Make sure that new designs conform to all other municipal regulations, including the Jefferson County Development Code and Zoning District Regulations.

*NC2* Do not demolish contributing structures in a historic district to make way for new construction. Non-contributing buildings are identified in each of the district or individual landmark designations or National Register Nominations

*NC3* Design new construction so that the building height, directional emphasis, scale, massing, and volume reflect the architectural context established by surrounding structures.

*NC4* Make sure that the scale of new construction does not conflict with the historic character of the neighborhood.

**Filling Gaps Is a Sensitive Issue**

*This new building incorporates a number of historic features into a modern, yet traditional, design: slightly-projecting facade, raised foundation, contrasting lintels and sills, masonry construction, and covered entry.*

*NC5* Incorporate materials and design elements that complement the color, size, texture, and level of craftsmanship seen in surrounding buildings.

*NC6* Do not use materials in new construction that are visually incompatible with surrounding historic buildings within the district. Materials to be avoided include: ornamental pierced concrete masonry screens and walls, "antiqued" brick, wrought-iron porch columns, chain-link fencing, exterior carpeting, jalousie windows, glass block, picture windows, unpainted wood, and asphalt siding.

*NC7* Design new construction to reinforce the human scale of historic districts where this is a character-defining feature.

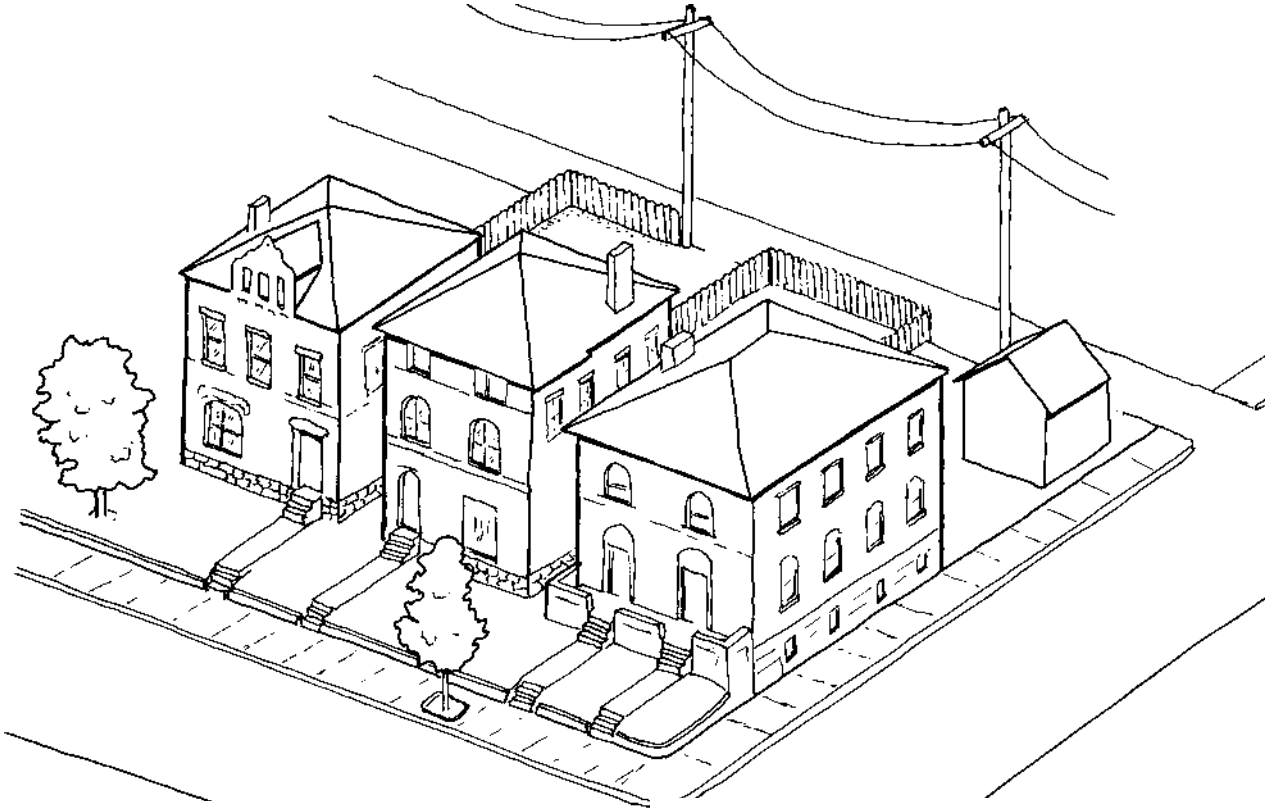
*NC8* Design new construction in such a way that it does not disrupt important public views and vistas.

*NC9* Reinforce existing patterns of open space and enclosure, created by circulation routes, fences, walls, lawns, and allees of trees, in designs for new construction.

*NC10* Design infill construction that reinforces the spatial organization established by surrounding buildings. The character of historic streetscapes relies heavily on the visual continuity and patterns established by the repetition of similarly-designed facades.

*NC11* Design infill construction in such a way that the facade's organization closely relates to surrounding buildings. Window and door openings should be similar in size to their historic counterparts, as should the proportion of window to wall space. Cornice lines, columns, and storefronts are other important character-defining facade elements.

## Considerations For Designing New Construction in a Historic Residential District



- *Do buildings in that location have a consistent setback from the street?*
- *Do buildings share a consistent height, cornice line, or roof form?*
- *Are existing buildings vertical or horizontal in character?*
- *How do buildings relate to one another? What is the spacing between them?*
- *What building materials or design features do existing buildings have in common?*
- *How will construction affect existing pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns, streetscape issues, and parking?*

*NC12* Design new construction so that the building mass has a similar sense of lightness or weight as surrounding historic structures. Mass is determined by the proportion of solid surfaces (walls) to voids (window and door openings). Historic window proportions are generally two-and-one-half (height) by one (width).

*NC13* Develop designs for new construction using windows that are sympathetic to the window patterns of surrounding buildings. Use of comparable frame dimensions, proportions, and muntin configurations is encouraged.

*NC14* Develop designs for new construction using front doors that are sympathetic to the door patterns of surrounding buildings. Use of comparable frame dimensions, proportion, and panel and lite configuration is encouraged.

*NC15* Design new construction so that the orientation of the main entrance is the same as the majority of other buildings on the street.

*NC16* Incorporate paved walks between sidewalks and the front entrances for new construction located on streets where this is a character-defining feature.

*NC17* Retain the character-defining features of a historic building when undertaking accessibility code-required work.

*NC18* Investigate removable or portable ramps as options to providing barrier-free access.

*NC19* Locate handicapped access ramps on secondary elevations wherever possible. If locating a ramp on the primary facade is required, it should be installed in a manner that does not damage historic fabric and is as unobtrusive as possible.

*NC20* Design infill construction so that it is compatible with the average height and width of surrounding buildings.

*NC21* Design new construction to have a floor-to-floor height that is within 10 percent of adjacent historic construction where the floor-to-floor height is relatively consistent, and a character-defining feature.

*NC22* Maintain the historic rhythm of the streetscape. The space between new construction and existing structures should fall within 20 percent of the average spacing for the block.

*NC23* Maintain historic setback patterns. In order to maintain the continuity of the streetscape, setbacks for new construction should either match that of adjacent buildings where all share the same setback or be within 20 percent of neighboring structures in areas with varied setbacks.

*NC24* Ensure that the roofs of new buildings relate to those of neighboring historic structures in pitch, complexity, and visual appearance of materials.

*NC25* Follow the precedent set by adjacent buildings when designing rooflines for infill construction. Where the predeominant form is flat, built-up roofs are preferred. Where the predeominant form is complex and steeply pitched, that is preferred. In blocks characterized by shallow-pitched roofs and pronounced overhangs with exposed rafters, these elements should be incorporated.

**FITTING IN**

Too Low and Horizontal

Too Tall and Vertical

*Buildings that are too tall and narrow or too low and expansive for their surroundings disrupt the streetscape. Carefully assess existing conditions around a lot before planning a new design.*

*NC26* Design new construction so that the orientation of the main roof form is parallel with the majority of other roofs on the street, where roof forms are relatively consistent and a character-defining feature.

*NC27* Design new construction to emphasize the existing cornice line on each block where this is a character-defining feature.

*NC28* Integrate mechanical systems into new construction in such a way that rooftops remain uncluttered.

*NC29* Make provisions for screening and storing trash receptacles when designing new construction.

*NC30* Use an exterior sheathing that is similar to those of other surrounding historic buildings. While use of wood siding is preferred, vinyl siding may be used for new construction, but only in areas where the predeominant historic construction material is wood.

*NC31* Use masonry types and mortars that are similar to surrounding buildings in designs for new construction. Red brick is the most common masonry material found throughout the city's historic districts.

*NC32* Incorporate stone or cast-stone sills and lintels into new construction designs on blocks where such elements are character-defining features.

*NC33* Do not use modern "antiqued" brick in new construction.

*NC34* Design new construction to have a raised masonry foundation, which is compatible in proportion and height with surrounding buildings. Foundation materials may be of a warm-toned poured concrete, split-face concrete block, or stuccoed concrete block that has a uniform, textured appearance.

*NC35* Incorporate front porches on blocks where they are character-defining features. Design of new porches should be compatible with the form, scale, and detailing of surrounding buildings. On blocks where porch columns are prevalent, new columns should always consist of a base, shaft, and capital, and convey the appearance of actually holding up the porch roof.

*NC36* Design porches on newly-constructed buildings so that the floor is even with or a maximum of one step below the corresponding floor of the house, the ceiling is even with that of adjacent rooms, the floor is at least 6' deep, the rhythm of the porch bays matches the facade's pattern of solids and voids, and the porch fascia board matches the height of the window head.

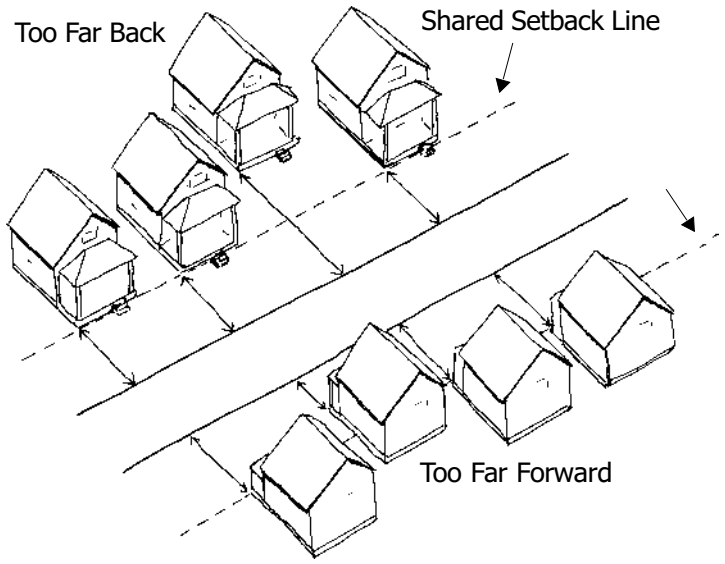
*NC37* Design new garages or other secondary structures so that they complement the scale, roof form, setback, and materials of adjacent secondary structures.

*NC38* Site new garages adjacent to alleys where present. Review the garage prototype insert that identifies styles appropriate to preservation districts when planning a garage construction project.

**FACADE ORGANIZATION**


*Look to see how windows, doors, porches, and roofing create a pattern that unites buildings along a given block. Then, design a building that extends that pattern.*

**LINE UP—SETBACKS ESTABLISH BLOCK CONTINUITY**




*NC39* Where no alleys exist, garages should be sited at the rear of the property behind the main house. Garage doors should not face the street, and access should be along the side yard. Landscape screening along the driveway is encouraged.

*NC40* Use of smaller, single garage doors rather than expansive double or triple doors is preferred.

*NC41* Orient the roofline of a new garage so that it is parallel with the main house or follow the predominate pattern of existing secondary structures where such a pattern exists.

*NC42* Roof pitch should be no less than one in six. Where the roof form of the main house is character-defining, owners are encouraged to echo the form of the main house.

*NC43* Design new construction so that access to off-street parking is off alleys or secondary streets wherever possible.

*NC44* Incorporate storm-water management provisions into the design of new construction, so that any related runoff will not adversely impact nearby historic resources.

*New construction (right) is a close match to historic construction (left). Frame construction is appropriate for this block, which contains a mix of masonry and wood houses.*

## Odd Couples—
## Unsuccessful Infill Construction

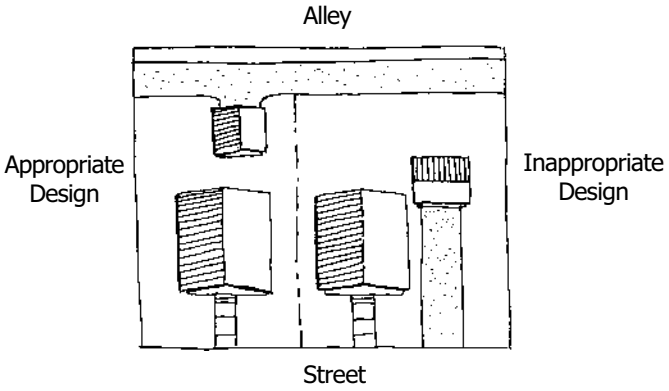
*What is wrong with this infill building?*

- *Height*
- *Street Orientation*
- *Floor-to-Floor Height*
- *Chimney Placement*
- *Window Arrangement*
- *Roof Pitch*

*What is wrong with the infill building to the left?*

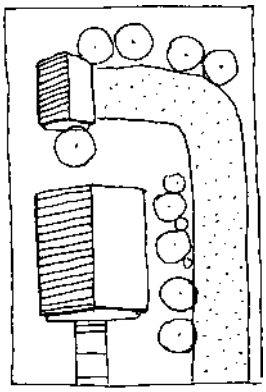
- *Height*
- *Proportion*
- *Setback*
- *Roof*
- *Window Arrangement*
- *Parking Placement*

## Garage Placement



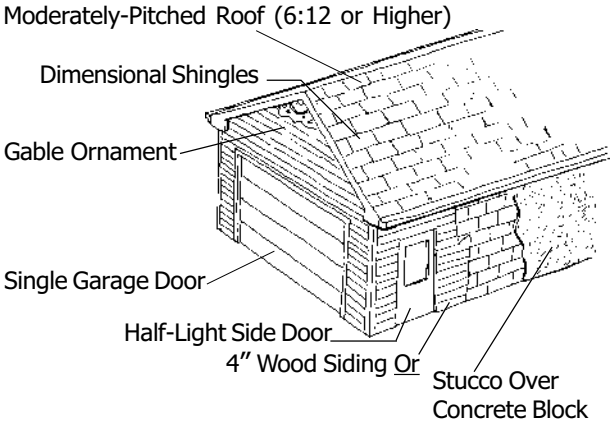

*Garage access should be off alleys where they exist. Garages should also be positioned behind the main building to screen it from view. Keeping the roof line parallel to that of the main house or the prevailing roof line along the alley is best.*

Appropriate Design
Where No Alley Exists



*Where there is no alley and space permits, a side-yard driveway may be acceptable. Garages should still be placed behind the house, and the drive should be appropriately landscaped.*

## A Garage Prototype




*Alleys are important character-defining features for several preservation districts. Selecting appropriate design features can transform an undistinguished, utilitarian garage into a structure that truly complements the craftsmanship of the main building.*